

A FEW GENERAL REMARKS

The outstanding features of this new strain of *Viola* are:

1. It produces variable flowers which exemplify the connecting link between a 5-merous and a 4-merous flower.
2. It embodies the phenomenon of peloria which changes the flower from an unsymmetrical one to one that is perfectly symmetrical.
3. With respect to (1) and (2) it remains uniform under great differences of environment.
4. It apparently breeds true to type both vegetatively and sexually.
5. Because of (4) it might be truly termed a mutation.

Other generations of this interesting strain of violets will be grown and reported on as time will permit but since the seeds are borne in capsules of cleistogamous flowers they might be considered the result of self-fertilization and therefore succeeding generations might not differ materially from the first unless the strain throws other mutations.

AN EXCURSION TO MOUNTAIN LAKE, VIRGINIA

BY WILLIAM ALPHONSO MURRILL

Our party of six left Blacksburg, Virginia, for Mountain Lake at seven o'clock on the morning of July 22, 1920, prepared to spend the day. Clear weather had succeeded a season of rain and the hay-makers were busy in the fields along the road as we passed, while the oat crop stood ready for harvesting. Nature had not been stingy in any particular; everything planted in gardens and fields was growing and yielding most bountifully, while the last raspberries and dewberries and the first of the blackberries indicated an unusual abundance of wild food.

The first range we climbed and crossed was Brush Mountain, whose southern flank was covered with stunted pitch pine, bracken fern, sweet fern, and a wealth of *Coreopsis seniifolia*, with attractive yellow flowers and leaves arranged in whorls of sixes. From Brush Mountain to Gap Mountain was only a few minutes' ride, across a narrow stretch of sterile land very

appropriately named Poverty Valley. By the roadside in the "Gap" was a spring of cool water and the hay-scented fern, *Dicksonia*, grew there in abundance. Nestled in a deep cove beyond Gap Mountain was the village of Newport, eight miles from Blacksburg and just halfway to Mountain Lake. After negotiating the steep hill to the north of Newport and crossing Sinking Creek, we were at the base of Salt Pond Mountain, with six miles of tortuous and rather rough climbing ahead of us. Our attention, however, became more and more directed to the increasing magnificence of the view and the successive changes in the character of the vegetation as we climbed from an elevation of 1,800 to one of 4,500 feet above the sea.

Along the road near the foot of the mountain, the common milkweed and the butterfly weed, with orange-colored flowers, bloomed profusely, interspersed with the blue, star-shaped flowers of the cultivated chicory, which has become very common in many parts of Virginia. In one of the hollows, a large clump of pale jewel-weed, *Impatiens pallida*, was seen in full flower. The most abundant weed at the lower elevations was *Actinomeris squarrosa*, often called "river-weed," which was easily recognized without flowers by its square, winged stem. As we approached the upper part of the mountain, after rounding the long curve that brought the valley of New River into view, the scarlet flowers of the fire pink, *Silene virginica*, gleamed from the rocky banks and large groves of chestnut trees in full flower indicated a bountiful crop of nuts, unaffected as yet by the canker.

Near the lake, we halted at the famous cold spring for a drink and then went on to the hotel, which is situated at the southern end of the lake, 4,000 feet above sea-level, with Bald Knob rising behind it 500 feet more. Sunset Hill lies to the westward, —famous for a large deposit of marine Devonian fossils and for its fine view. A thicket of common hazelnut bushes crowned this little eminence, with gooseberry bushes growing near. The beaked hazelnut, *Corylus rostrata*, is quite common on the northern flank of Bald Knob some distance above the hotel. The blueberry fruits were just beginning to ripen at this elevation, while the shin-leaf, *Pyrola americana*, was in flower and

the hay-scented fern, *Dicksonia punctilobula*, which is very abundant at Mountain Lake, was in full foliage with numerous young sporangia.

The margin of the lake was fringed with a dense thicket of *Rhododendron maximum* in full flower, and in the moist leaf-mold beneath the rhododendrons a number of brilliantly colored mushrooms grew. Near the spring on the right was a bed of *Oxalis Acetosella*, while nearby were several large trees of *Ilex monticola* and *Betula alleghaniensis*, the latter bearing black, aborted forms of *Pyropolyporus igniarius* similar to those found commonly on yellow birch in New England. I looked for *Par-nassia* but could not find it; then my attention was attracted to a pretty shadbush loaded with fruits, some of which were ripe.

At the lower end of the lake, a species of skullcap,—either *Scutellaria nervosa* or *S. pilosa*,—was abundant, covered with small blue flowers. Nearby, in the leaf-mold, I found an insect-eating fungus, *Cordyceps militaris*, growing on the pupa of the same insect which I found so commonly attacked by it in the mountains of western North Carolina. A beautiful specimen of the mountain silver-spot butterfly, *Argynnis cybele*, hovered near; but *A. diana* was not seen during the entire journey, although the males should have been on the wing by that time.

Field notes were made on many of the flowering plants seen, as well as on the fungi (which have been listed in *Mycologia*). In addition to those already mentioned, the following might be of interest:

HERBACEOUS PLANTS

Arisaema triphyllum, just passing out of flower; *Clintonia umbellata*, in leaf; *Trillium grandiflorum*, in leaf; *Unifolium canadense*, in fruit; *Apocynum androsaemifolium*, in flower; *Baptisia tinctoria*, so much used to keep flies from horses' heads, in flower; *Collinsonia canadensis*, in leaf; *Dalibarda repens*, so often mistaken for an evergreen violet, in leaf; *Dianthus Armeria*, in flower; *Echium vulgare*, very common at lower elevations, in flower; *Epigaea repens*, in leaf; *Galax aphylla*, more common on Brush Mountain, in fruit; *Gaultheria procumbens*, in flower; *Hydatica petiolaris*, a rare saxifrage abundant every season among the rocks on top of Bald Knob, in flower; *Lysimachia quadrifolia*, in flower; *Monarda fistulosa*, in flower; *Monotropa uniflora*, in flower and fruit; *Prunella vulgaris*, in flower; *Saponaria officinalis*, in flower; *Therofon aconitifolium*, on Bald Knob, in flower; and *Verbascum Thapsus*, in flower.

SHRUBS

Azalea nudiflora, in leaf; *Ceanothus americanus*, very abundant on Brush Mountain, in flower; *Comptonia peregrina*, also more common on Brush Mountain, in leaf; *Gaylussacia baccata*, in fruit; *Kalmia latifolia*, in fruit, *Oxycoccus erythrocarpus*, on Bald Knob; *Rosa virginiana*, in flower; *Rubus odoratus*, in flower; *Sambucus canadensis*, near the Cascade, in fruit; and *Viburnum alnifolium*, in fruit.

TREES

Acer pennsylvanicum, *A. rubrum*, *A. saccharinum*, and *A. saccharum*; *Alnus rugosa*; *Carpinus caroliniana*; *Celtis occidentalis*; *Cynxoylon floridum*; *Fagus grandifolia*; *Fraxinus americana*; *Hamamelis virginiana*; *Hicoria glabra* and *H. ovata*; *Juglans cinerea* and *J. nigra*; *Juniperinus virginiana*; *Liriodendron Tulipifera*; *Magnolia acuminata*; *Nyssa sylvatica*; *Oxydendrum arboreum*, in flower; *Pinus rigida* and *P. Strobus*; *Prunus americana*; *Quercus alba*, *Q. coccinea*, *Q. palustris*, *Q. Prinus*, *Q. rubra*, and *Q. velutina*; *Robinia Pseudo-Acacia*, badly attacked by *Fulvifomes Robiniae*; *Sassafras Sassafras*; *Sorbus americana*, on Bald Knob; *Tilia americana*, in flower; *Tsuga canadensis*; and *Ulmus americana*.

As may be judged from the above account, the flora of Mountain Lake is similar to that described in TORREYA a few years ago for Apple Orchard Mountain in the Blue Ridge, but the Carolina rhododendron and a few other striking elements are absent.

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NOTES ON SCLEROPOA

By J. C. NELSON

At the end of a rambling series of notes on "Some Oregon Exotics" in the American Botanist for November, 1918 (24: 129), attention was called to the discovery of *Scleropoa rigida* (L.) Griseb. at Salem, Oregon in May, 1917. Since the plants found at that time were growing precariously in the crevices of an old brick building in the business district, and were looked upon with extreme disfavor by the street-commissioner, it did not seem prudent to regard the species as a permanent addition to our flora. Since that time the building has been changed from a junk-shop to an automobile-station, and an attempt has been made to eradicate the weeds by which it was originally surrounded and restore the neglected street-parking; but in spite of all these "improvements" the grass has stubbornly reappeared each season, and this year (1920) has established itself profusely